British Palestine Mandate: British White Papers

White Papers - official reports by a British Government commission - were usually issued following government investigative commissions.
Famous White Papers issued during the British Mandate were in 1922, 1930 & 1939.

1922 White Paper
The first official manifesto interpreting the Balfour Declaration, it was issued on June 3, 1922, after the Haycraft Commission of Inquiry published its findings on the Arab riots of 1921. Although the White Paper stated that the Balfour Declaration could not be amended and that the Jews were in Palestine by right, it reduced the area of the Mandate by excluding the area east of the Jordan River, which was given to the Emir Abdullah. This document also established the principle of "economic absorptive capacity" as a factor for determining the immigration quota of Jews to Palestine.

1930 "Passfield" White Paper
Issued on October 21, 1930, following the release of the Shaw Commission findings on the cause of the Arab riots of 1929. The document built off the findings of the Hope-Simpson Report which investigated the possibilities for future immigration to Palestine. The paper stated that because of the shortage of arable land, Jewish settlement would be permitted only under stringent government supervision. On February 13, 1931, British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald sent a letter to Dr. Weizmann in an attempt to calm tensions by slightly easing these provisions.

1939 White Paper
Issued on May 17, 1939, it rejected the Peel Commission's partition plan on the grounds that it was not feasible. The document stated that Palestine would be neither a Jewish state nor an Arab one, but an independent state to be established within ten years. Jewish immigration to Palestine was limited to 75,000 for the first five years, subject to the country's "economic absorptive capacity", and would later be contingent on Arab consent. Stringent restrictions were imposed on land acquisition by Jews. The Jewish Agency for Palestine issued a scathing response to the White Paper, saying the British were denying the Jewish people their rights in "darkest hour of Jewish history.